

# TOTALLY INDYPENDENT

Newsletter of Haringey Solidarity Group

[www.haringey.org.uk](http://www.haringey.org.uk)

"If hard work were such a wonderful thing, surely the rich would have kept it all to themselves" - Joseph Lane Kirkland, American union leader

## GRENFELL TOWER RESIDENTS: YOU ARE NOT ALONE

"When society places hundreds of proletarians in such a position that they inevitably meet a too early and an unnatural death, one which is quite as much a death by violence as that by the sword or bullet; its deed is murder just as surely as the deed of the single individual."

"These words were written by Friedrich Engels in 1845. Over 170 years later, Britain remains a country that murders its poor. When four separate government ministers are warned that Grenfell and other high rises are a serious fire risk, then an inferno isn't unfortunate. It is inevitable. What happened wasn't a "terrible tragedy" or some other studio-sofa platitude: it was social murder."

This statement is from the Grenfell Action Group (GAG) website from 22nd June 2017, and one we wholeheartedly support.

Again from their website, as we can't say it any better: "the many who lost their lives in this catastrophe were our friends and neighbours. We tried to speak for them in life and we will continue to speak for them now. We share the sense of anger and injustice that has troubled this community for years."

"Even the dogs in the street know that the flammable cladding encasing the exterior of Grenfell Tower played a major part in spreading and accelerating what began as a single dwelling fire with such rapidity that the entire interior of the 24 storey building became a raging inferno in less than an hour. It is incumbent on us also to state our firmly held belief that the



cladding in question was not introduced for the benefit of the residents of Grenfell Tower but because Kensington and Chelsea Council had redeveloped the surrounding area. The cladding on Grenfell Tower was intended to pimp it up so that it wouldn't spoil the image of creeping gentrification that the Council are intent on creating, here and throughout the rest of North Kensington."

According to a Guardian article (14 June) government ministers were warned numerous times that breaches of fire safety standards are common in the UK and the use of cladding on high-rise blocks is unsafe. The government ignored fire experts' advice. In the 1990s the Home Office received a damning report by architect Sam Webb following a survey of hundreds of residential tower blocks. It found half of the

buildings inspected did not meet basic fire safety regulations. Webb described the state of Britain's tower blocks as 'a disaster waiting to happen'.

The Lakanal House fire in Southwark in 2009 subsequently proved him right. Six people died when a fire in the high rise block spread from the ninth to tenth and eleventh floors of the building via flammable cladding that had been fixed to the exterior of the block.

Those who died obeyed instructions to stay in their homes. The advice to stay put would have been correct were it not for the recent obsession with cladding high rise buildings and in particular with the use of cheaper flammable cladding, which renders the standard fire safety advice redundant, and caused the fires at Lakanal House and at Grenfell Tower to spread so rapidly and uncontrollably from floor to floor. None of this information about known fire risks associated with the use of cladding was ever communicated to the residents of Grenfell Tower.

Again from GAG's website: "of course there is more to all this controversy than the media have so far reported and we have evidence that we will present here that strongly supports the widely held local belief that a culture of complacency, indifference and negligence has continued for many years at the Kensington & Chelsea TMO and with which the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea (RBKC) are complicit and equally negligent."

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# THE BIG HUG

In April, the Big Hug around Seven Sisters Market at Wards Corner was a resounding success. A huge crowd of over a thousand turned up to hear about the threat of demolition to this site and the possible loss of the Indoor Market which holds the second largest concentration of Latin American businesses in the UK. It also serves as an important cultural centre for this community.

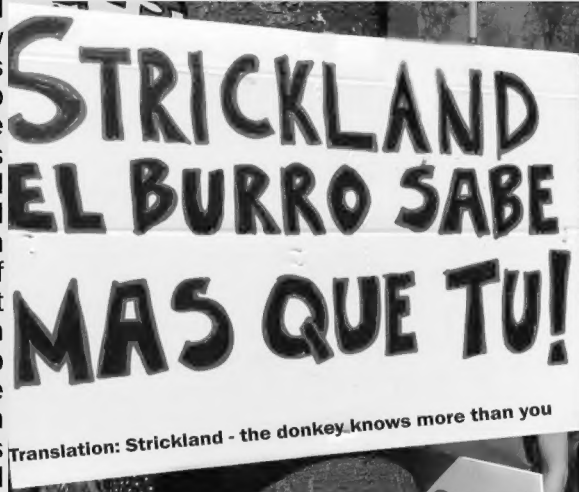
This site is currently facing a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) from Haringey Council and the developer, Grainger. This is due to be heard on 11th July this year.

Over 2,000 people objected to the CPO. Though Grainger are obliged to rehouse the market, the fear is traders will be priced out of the new development. This promise doesn't help the rest of the occupants of this site. Many have had their lives blighted and face eviction with no offer of rehousing. The last years have been uncertain for a group of people who have faced persecution in their own countries and hoped to find

refuge here in London. Sadly, they have been badly let down for the last eight years.

Despite this, the market put on a display of music and dancing that showed such hope and optimism, that it couldn't fail to raise the spirits of everyone there. The audience responded with rapturous applause. It was a timely reminder of what we have been fighting for. Tottenham has shown, once again, what they feel about the destruction of their community by developers. The campaign is in urgent need of funds to pay for the legal costs of the CPO hearing, and have set up a crowd funding page for this purpose.

Search for: 'Save the Latin Village' on [youcaring.com](http://youcaring.com) and 'Saving Seven Sisters Market' on [youtube.com](http://youtube.com)



# GRENFELL TOWER

**Continued from front page:** The Grenfell Action Group and the Radical Housing Network are demanding:

- That all Grenfell residents be offered long-term and affordable housing in their local area. To meet this need, RBKC should buy local private property and turn it into council housing.

- That Grenfell Tower is fully rebuilt and not a single unit of social housing is lost – this must not be an opportunity to privatise homes or for developers to make a profit.

- That public investigation into the tragedy (via inquest and/or inquiry) is independent, and has the complete trust of those affected. It should leave no stone unturned.

- Long-term investment in decent, secure, safe public

housing. Grenfell is the result of 30 years of council housing disinvestment, deregulation and austerity.

- That public authorities be held to account and criminal proceedings brought against all those responsible.

We would add to this that all combustible materials are banned from being used in any buildings and any that are presently there be removed immediately.

We also need to remember that it's not just in tower blocks that dodgy developers, builders and some public bodies cut corners on and put our lives at risk. Commercial premises, hotels, hospitals, schools all need to be looked at as well. Premier Inn have recently stated they are "extremely concerned" about the cladding on the new hotel at Tottenham Hale.

# THE STATE WE ARE IN

Karl Marx once said "democracy is the road to socialism".

Alas for the supporters of Jeremy Corbyn, the recent election result means that any hopes of voting in socialism have been blocked again.

There is no doubt that his message of social reform resonated with a lot of the population, especially young people. This led to Labour, against all the odds, winning 30 more seats than two years ago.

Even those backstabbing Labour MPs have started to reluctantly praise Corbyn and laud his election campaign.

The result for Theresa May is a disaster. Although the Tories won the election they lost their majority in parliament. They are now looking to sell their soul to the devil in the form of a coalition with the Democratic Unionist Party. To achieve this alliance with religious bigots, they may be willing to sell out women by limiting their right to abortions.

Theresa May's campaign of sound-bites and smears was pathetic. The lack of detail around policy led people to question what they stood for. Here in Haringey, though, we know exactly what they're about: austerity, more cuts, and the rich getting richer while the poor get poorer.

Even if Corbyn had won, implementing reforms to improve the lives of those at the bottom end of society would not be so easy. He would face stiff resistance from big business, the media, other political parties and the right wing of his own party.

The representative democracy we have in this country just doesn't work for the majority of people. It isn't meant to – it's used to fool the people into thinking they have some say in what happens when in reality voting gives us very little power at all.

Whichever party gets in, voting every few years changes very little for most of us. Only by organizing together at a grassroots level in our workplaces and communities can we actually bring about the changes we need and want.

Far from it being a road to a better world, parliamentary democracy could best be summed up by another Marx, Groucho. "it's a travesty of a mockery of a sham of a mockery of a travesty of a sham".





Haringey Council are still refusing to answer the concerns Northumberland Park residents have about the Haringey Development Vehicle (HDV) which will lead to the demolition of their homes. Many residents still don't know what's going to happen to them.

There has been talk of sending all tenants of Northumberland Park to live in Stoke. This has been "in the pipeline for some years". To cover their footsteps, Haringey Council has employed a number of "consultants" from the New Labour camp to tell locals the council has the answer to their problems, although they won't say what these "answers" are.

Many members of the Northumberland Park Tenants Association are becoming more and

more disgruntled. A number of their members have been banned from meeting - on the grounds that they are troublemakers. The leadership of the association has close links with the local authority. There has been no concrete information given to residents and they have still not been offered a vote on their own future.

Many anti HDV groups have got together to raise awareness to, and for, the residents of Northumberland Park including a march and rally on Monday 3rd July. A number of initiatives such as Northumberland Park Decides and Haringey Defend Council Housing have joined forces with other associations to stop this.

**Stop the HDV campaign:**  
[facebook.com/2billionpoundgamble](https://www.facebook.com/2billionpoundgamble)

## STOP THIS MADNESS

The recent attack on Muslims leaving late night prayers in Finsbury Park led to the murder of a Haringey resident, and serious injury to 11 other people.

This was just one of hundreds of Islamophobic hate crimes in the last month.

The attacker followed on twitter the leaders of the far-right Britain First, who are notorious for anti-Muslim stunts - including "invading" mosques, and organising "Christian Patrols".

The media constantly make space for the peddlers of hate. Katie Hopkins, who called refugees "cockroaches", and demanded a "final solution" to Muslims, until recently had her own radio show on LBC. Meanwhile the Sun and the Daily Mail pump out a constant stream of bile about migrants and "jihadis".

Incredibly, the morning after the Finsbury Park attack, a former leader of the EDL was invited on ITV's Good Morning Britain saying Muslims should be banned from the UK - demonstrating that the media will shamelessly publicise fascists in order to chase ratings. If they had invited someone like Abu Hamza after the Manchester suicide attack, a lot of people would have been outraged at such insensitivity.

After the attack in London Bridge, Theresa May claimed they needed to stamp out "safe spaces" for extremists. The Tories' own election guru, Lynton Crosby is notorious for stirring up racism - implying, falsely, that Sadiq Khan had terrorist links during the mayoral election last year.

If they had any decency the media and political establishment would reflect on the appalling actions their rhetoric can

## STOP RACIST CHECKS

It used to be that the only place you needed to show your passport was on entering or leaving the country.

But ever since Theresa May announced the creation of a "hostile environment" for migrants, the places where you need your documents just keep multiplying.

Since 2016, landlords are required to check the immigration status of anyone they rent to. Landlords are not trained in determining immigration status and nearly half say they are less likely to consider renting to someone without a British passport because of these "right to rent" checks. Over a quarter say they are less likely to even open discussions with anyone with a name that "doesn't sound British".

People of colour already suffer discrimination when trying to find a place to rent and this policy gives racist landlords a ready-made excuse to refuse a letting.

Since 2017, hospitals have been required to check patients' immigration status up-front before providing secondary care. This was supposedly to solve the non-existent problem of health tourism but it means that anyone unable to pay or who doesn't have the right papers cannot access NHS care. Patients' data is also being passed to Immigration officials.

Schools are now made to collect data on the nationality of children. Unless parents exercise their right to withhold this data it may be passed to the Home Office to identify undocumented migrants. Similarly, migrants face being reported to the Home Office if they are a victim of a crime, report it to the police and the police suspect the person doesn't have the correct documents.

The "hostile environment" prevents migrant families from accessing decent housing, education and healthcare. It leaves them vulnerable to exploitation, crime, squalor and destitution. We must resist it.

- **Against Borders for Children** organise a boycott against the School Census: [schoolsabc.net](https://www.schoolsabc.net)

**Docs Not Cops** are leading the campaign to resist NHS Charges: [docsnotcops.co.uk](https://www.docsnotcops.co.uk)

- **Homes Not Borders** are opposing the right to rent: [homesnotborders.net](https://www.homesnotborders.net)

inspire. As witnessed in the terrible attacks in Manchester and London.

Random attacks on innocent individuals, whoever they are, and in support of whatever political/religious cause is wrong. Many of us hold strong political/religious views. We need to find a way to voice these views and discuss them openly without having to mow down people or blow the shit out of them.



## BATTLE OF WOOD GREEN

Hundreds recently gathered at Ducketts Common to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the 'Battle of Wood Green'. In 1977, 3,000 people challenged a National Front (NF) march through the area. The NF, at that time a growing and disturbing electoral and physical force, had bussed in around 1,000 racists in what they hoped would be a provocative and divisive show of 'white power' in a multicultural urban locality.

However, the whole of Haringey was united in condemnation. The march was attacked, with the racists protected by hordes of police. Everything to hand was chucked at

them, and local passers-by hurled insults too. The demonstration managed to continue to a grass verge north of Wood Green. A few protestors then managed to get through police lines.

A few months later in Lewisham thousands of anti-fascists succeeded in breaking up another NF demo. After the NF were smashed, local people - especially local black youth - took over the streets for hours despite heavy policing. It became a statement of opposition to police racism and of community empowerment.

The NF was humiliated and gradually dwindled in numbers and influence.

## COUNCIL HYPOCRITES

On St George's Day this year, the great and the good of Haringey local politics gathered on Duckett's Common. Special guest Jeremy Corbyn was invited to "celebrate diversity" on the 40th Anniversary of the Battle of Wood Green - where the National Front were beaten off the streets of Haringey by spontaneous community resistance.

It seems somewhat ironic that Haringey Council sponsors and enthusiastically supports an event to celebrate the beating of a party with racist policies and views.

Haringey Council is currently running a ruthless campaign of social cleansing to gentrify

Tottenham and Wood Green and bring richer (and whiter) people in to replace the current residents. This includes evicting the Latin Village at Seven Sisters, deporting homeless rough-sleepers and demolishing housing estates like Northumberland Park. These policies disproportionately impact migrants, the working class, and people of colour.

Haringey Council's vision for Tottenham is one where "diversity" is a joke: colourful branding in glossy brochures for luxury flats - rather than one where everyone can live free from racist police and state harassment, eviction, poverty or deportation.

## WHO WE ARE

In 1991, Haringey Solidarity Group (HSG) emerged from the Anti-Poll Tax campaign. We wanted to create a long-term, vibrant, non-hierarchical group, unlike political parties where ambitions and posturing displace real politics.

We believe in ridding ourselves of the current system which places profit and power before people's needs. This involves getting organised, fighting back and collectively taking those decisions which affect our daily lives.

We think people should take control of their community and workplace struggles, support each other, encourage practical solidarity, build the necessary skills and knowledge for these struggles and generate strong, permanent, grassroots networks.

Many of us are involved with local residents', community and campaign groups within the borough. We support workers in dispute, campaigns against public service cuts and threatened community amenities. We are active on environmental, housing and claimants' issues and resist state controls.

Come and share your views at our monthly meeting. We welcome your involvement and with practical activities including distributing this newsletter and producing other materials including posters and leaflets.

For more about HSG, visit [www.haringey.org.uk](http://www.haringey.org.uk), befriend us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter @\_hsg\_, contact us at PO Box 2474, London N8, phone 0845 2235270 or email [info@haringey.org.uk](mailto:info@haringey.org.uk)



● Forty-five of Haringey's 60 councillors from both sides of the political spectrum join to show their repugnance of NF racist policies.

**HSG Comment: What a difference 40 years makes. Now our local politicians do the dirty work for the racists by trying to socially cleanse our borough.**